DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 078 CG 008 184

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TITLE	Case Studies in Practical Career Guidance, Number 13: Youth Career Action Program, San Jose Unified School District, San Jose California.
INSTITUTION	American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation.
REPORT NO	AIR-346-6-73-TR
PUB DATE	Jun 73
CONTRACT	OEC-0-72-4986
NOTE	23p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Career Planning; *Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Programs; Employment Qualifications; *Individualized Programs; Job Placement; Secondary School Students; *Urban Areas; *Vocational Development
IDENTIFIERS	California; San Jose; Youth Career Action Program

ABSTRACT

The Youth Career Action Program is an example of a vocational-educational program that can be implemented within a large city in conjunction with a secondary school district. The YCAP Center provides a clearly designated place for hard-to-place young people--primarily those who are under-educated, economically disadvantaged, and have little concept of work and employer expectations--to come for highly individualized services relating to vocational and educational development. The specific goal of YCAP is to be a focal point for school, governmental, and community efforts to aid the target population. The program annually helps at least 1,000 young people to prepare for entry into suitable jobs and plan for satisfactory careers. (Author)

CASE STUDIES IN PRACTICAL CAREER GUIDANCE
NUMBER 13

ED 082078

Youth Career Action Program

San Jose Unified School District

San Jose, California

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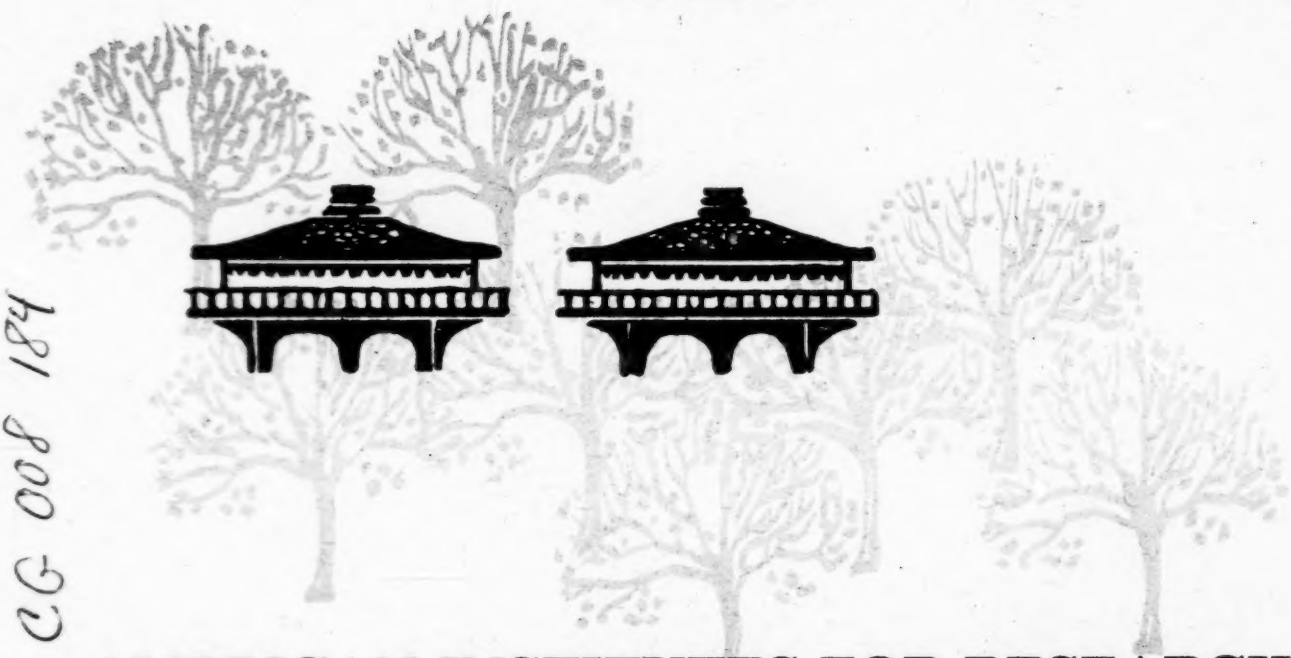

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AIR-346-6/73-TR

TECHNICAL REPORT

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CASE STUDIES IN PRACTICAL CAREER GUIDANCE

NUMBER 13

Youth Career Action Program
San Jose Unified School District
San Jose, California

Laurie I. Hopkins

American Institutes for Research
in the Behavioral Sciences
Palo Alto, California

June, 1973

The project reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The opinions expressed, however, do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the Office of Education should be inferred.

U.S. Department of

HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education

Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation

This case study is one in a series of thirteen which was produced by the Youth Development Research Program of the American Institutes for Research under contract with the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation of the U.S. Office of Education. The purpose of the contract was to examine the practical career guidance, counseling, and placement which is provided to noncollege-bound secondary level students. As part of the effort, programs which are making an illustrative attempt to deal with the needs of noncollege-bound youth were identified and described in case studies. Case studies have been written on the following programs:

1. Baltimore Placement and Follow-up Program
   Baltimore City Public Schools
   Baltimore, Maryland

2. Career Development Center
   Troy High School
   Fullerton, California

3. Career and Educational Planning Program
   Pioneer Senior High School
   San Jose, California

4. Career Guidance Program
   Hood River Valley High School
   Hood River, Oregon

5. Computerized Vocational Information System
   Willowbrook High School
   Villa Park, Illinois

6. Coordinated Vocational and Academic Education
   North Gwinnett High School
   Suwanee, Georgia

7. Developmental Career Guidance Project
   Detroit Public Schools
   Detroit, Michigan

8. Employability Development Team
   Cleveland Public Schools
   Cleveland, Ohio

9. Job Development Program
   Cleveland Public Schools
   Cleveland, Ohio

10. Kimberly Guidance Program
    Kimberly High School
    Kimberly, Idaho

11. Lenawee Vocational-Technical Center and Placement Program
    Adrian, Michigan

12. Occupational Learning Center
    Syracuse City School District
    Syracuse, New York

13. Youth Career Action Program
    San Jose Unified School District
    San Jose, California

Other products of this contract include Practical Career Guidance, Counseling, and Placement for the Noncollege-Bound Student: A Review of the Literature, and the project's final report which is entitled Planning, Structuring, and Evaluating Practical Career Guidance for Integration by Noncollege-Bound Youths. The final report outlines a planning-evaluation model which program personnel may use in developing local career guidance counseling and placement services.

YOUTH CAREER ACTION PROGRAM
SAN JOSE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Abstract

The Youth Career Action Program is an example of a vocational-educational program that can be implemented within a large city in conjunction with a secondary school district. The YCAP Center provides a clearly designated place for hard-to-place young people--primarily those who are under-educated, economically disadvantaged, and have little concept of work and employer expectations--to come for highly individualized services relating to vocational and educational development. The specific goal of YCAP is to be a focal point for school, governmental, and community efforts to aid the target population. The program annually helps at least 1,000 young people to prepare for entry into suitable jobs and plan for satisfactory careers.

YOUTH CAREER ACTION PROGRAM

YCAP is my kind of place. Right now I'm coming to the school here at YCAP to improve my math, reading, and English before I begin a job training program next month. I know th YCAP teachers and counselors really care about me and what I want to do. That makes me care more about myself, and I try harder at what I'm working for.

--Alejandro

Introduction

Eighteen-year-old Alejandro is describing his reactions to the Youth Career Action Program (YCAP), located on the east side of San Jose, California. Alejandro was a high school dropout at 16 who wandered the streets of East San Jose for two years, looking vaguely for work. In January 1973, at a friend's suggestion, he came to the YCAP center for vocational assistance.

Since the center's opening in January 1971, hundreds of youths have used the services offered by YCAP in attempting to meet their vocational and educational needs. The majority of these youths are members of ethnic minority groups--primarily Mexican-American--and live in the San Jose Model Cities or are in a similar economically disadvantaged area.

When a youth first visits YCAP, he is interviewed by one of the YCAP staff. During the initial interview, the client is asked to state his reasons for coming to YCAP. He and the counselor then ascertain his specific needs and discuss which of YCAP's services would offer him the most appropriate assistance. In addition to this exploratory interview, YCAP services include:

1. Vocational-educational counseling beyond the initial interview.
2. Vocational testing: General Aptitude Test Battery, Kuder Interest Test, SRA Reading Laboratory Test (III), Mathematics Test.
3. Provision of occupational and labor market information.
4. Basic education preparatory to job training and other educational programs.
5. Referral to training facilities.

6. Referral to job placements.

7. Referral to other community agencies and services.

8. Guidance on admission to colleges and universities.

Alejandro and the YCAP counselor pinpointed basic skills education and subsequent referral to a job training program as the services that would best serve his needs. The day after his first visit to YCAP, he enrolled in YCAP's alternative school, which is located within the YCAP center.

YCAP's school provides individualized instruction. Each student tailors an educational program relevant to his specific needs with guidance from the teacher. He then works and progresses at his own rate on a nongraded, nonfail system. He regulates his own school week, day by day, generally between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. In general, students attend the YCAP school about 18 to 20 hours a week.

YCAP was established in the San Jose, California, Model Cities area in January 1971 to help meet vocational and educational needs of hard-to-place young people, aged 15 to 24, who primarily are undereducated and have little concept of the world of work and employer expectations. The YCAP center provides these youths a clearly designated place to come for highly individualized services relating to vocational and educational development. YCAP has become a focal point for school, governmental, and community efforts to aid young people, particularly disadvantaged youths, to prepare for entry into suitable jobs and to plan for satisfactory, self-sustaining careers.

YCAP is housed in an old downtown store building located at 1261 East Santa Clara Street in San Jose. This facility is leased, and its location was selected to best serve the target population.

Currently, there are four and one-half YCAP positions: Center Director, Vocational Guidance Coordinator, Youth Advisor, the Director's secretary, and a half-time instructor. In addition, the instructor and counselors are helped by a teacher aide/community liaison worker and by tutors who are work-study college students, counselors-in-training, and/or community volunteer workers.

The YCAP staff assumes major responsibility for disseminating information on YCAP through print and broadcast media and personal contacts to (1) potential clients; (2) agencies, organizations, and schools to or from which clients may be referred; (3) interested citizens; and (4) the general public.

In September 1972, after 19 months in operation, YCAP contracted with the American Institutes for Research in Palo Alto, California, for an evaluation of YCAP activities from July 1972 to June 1973. The purpose of the evaluation project was to provide YCAP's Advisory Cabinet and staff with decision-making input needed for continued improvement of YCAP.

The evaluation began by identifying YCAP's product and process objectives for (1) the young people who constitute YCAP's past and current clientele, (2) YCAP staff members, and (3) YCAP cabinet members. The study data on objectives indicated that YCAP was achieving about 83% of its assessed objectives and that the remaining assessed objectives were being at least partially met. YCAP is focusing on critical youth needs and is organized effectively to meet its clients' needs, as well as to assume responsibility for facilitating the personal growth and vocational-educational planning of every client. Moreover, YCAP's overall rapport and relationships with community agencies and schools appear to be positive and effective contributors to the success of the project.

Origins of the Project

Employment for youths is a major problem in Santa Clara County, in which San Jose is the largest city. According to the 1970 census, there are 201,763 youths aged 14 to 24 in the county. The current economic slowdown has made job finding conditions even more difficult for this sector of the county's population. Many of the youths need part-time or summer employment to stay in school; others are unemployed members of the labor force who urgently need work to support themselves and their families. With the phasing out of the Youth Opportunity Centers from the State of California Department of Employment and with the priority of the California Department of Human Resources and other manpower agencies being defined as serving unemployed heads of households, the burden of providing vocational services to out-of-school youths became the responsibility of YCAP.

In addition to the age discrimination ordinarily encountered by those under 21, a large number of youths in need of employment are Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans, who must also overcome ethnic discrimination and who require specialized services to prepare them for the labor market.

The number of high school dropouts in Santa Clara County has averaged about 11,600 per year in recent years. East San Jose is one of the three areas

with the highest concentration of dropouts. YCAP was established to meet the challenge of providing educational and vocational services to these young adults.

One of the major purposes of this project is active involvement of the community in serving the needs of disadvantaged youths. The project was planned by a consortium representing the public secondary schools and community colleges in the area along with the Department of Human Resources Development, the Model Cities Program, and manpower agencies including Operation SER, the Mexican-American Opportunity Center, and Economic and Social Opportunities, Inc. YCAP was implemented under the aegis of the San Jose Unified School District.

Since no agency existed before YCAP to serve the needs of this specific target population, the originators of YCAP had to create a model of operation similar to programs in other cities related to vocational-educational alternatives for youths. Because the majority of target youths have long histories of negative experiences with their school teachers and counselors, juvenile probation and law enforcement personnel, and adults in general, the originators of YCAP made every effort to avoid creating just another place that would remind the youths of these negative experiences. With this factor in mind, representatives of the consortium conducted a survey of a random sample of the target population to assess exactly what aspects of a vocational-educational center might repel them. The results of this study were instrumental in designing the YCAP facility.

YCAP is funded through Amendments of the California State Vocational Education Act of 1968, Part A, Section 102(b): Programs for Disadvantaged Persons. This funding is issued on a year-to-year basis. Supplementary funding has been solicited through educational grants, educational loans, and in-kind money through services solicited by participating agencies.

Project Development

The Administrative Cabinet of the YCAP consortium is the policy-making group composed of the vocational education dean/director of each school district as well as representatives of the community groups mentioned earlier (ESO, SER, MAOC, HRD, and Model Cities). This cabinet was established before the center was opened. The purpose of the cabinet is to guide the Project Director in establishment of program goals and objectives and operation

of the center. Also, the cabinet is to assist in securing and maintaining the community support and cooperation that are essential for effective service to youths.

The major functions of the Administrative Cabinet are to:

1. Act as liaison with the public and their own agencies to ensure understanding and support of the center.

2. Help arouse public support, community interest and participation, and the means to provide new, needed services for youths.

3. Help establish cooperative working relationships with schools and other community services.

4. Advise on specific center activities; most of the members are specialists in their field, and their knowledge is used in setting up new programs and in analyzing weaknesses in ongoing activities.

5. Schedule Administrative Cabinet meetings as often as necessary to carry out the cabinet's functions; minutes of each meeting are prepared and kept on file.

The Assistant Superintendent of Adult and Vocational Education from the San Jose Unified School District (hereafter designated as Assistant Superintendent, SJUSD) will be responsible for implementing the policy decided on by the Administrative Cabinet. The YCAP Project Director is directly responsible to the Assistant Superintendent, SJUSD.

The consortium hired the Project Director, who in turn hired the project staff, which consists of the Director's secretary, a Vocational Guidance Coordinator, a Youth Advisor, a teacher half-time, and a community liaison/teacher aide. Also, counseling or teaching interns and community volunteers have worked with the staff at various times.

The major functions of the staff are to:

1. Implement the specified goals and objectives of the project.

2. Disseminate information on YCAP to the relevant populations and the general public.

3. Prepare and submit proposals for all funding.

4. Develop and implement innovations for improving YCAP's services and pinpoint those features of the project not working satisfactorily.

5. Attend Administrative Cabinet meetings to receive its counsel and concerns and to offer input.

The Assistant Superintendent, SJUSD, stated that YCAP's management success during its first two years in operation resulted primarily from the following factors:

1. The YCAP project puts into practice individualized career-oriented concepts that many educators only talk about as being educational and vocational alternatives to traditional schooling.

2. The center is divorced from normal school settings and requirements and provides a positive, nonpunitive environment that attracts the target population.

3. There has been effective involvement of many community agencies and the use of many community resources to assist YCAP in achieving its goals.

4. The center is managed directly by the Project Director and his staff with advisory input from the cabinet.

The organization of YCAP is shown in the chart on the following page.

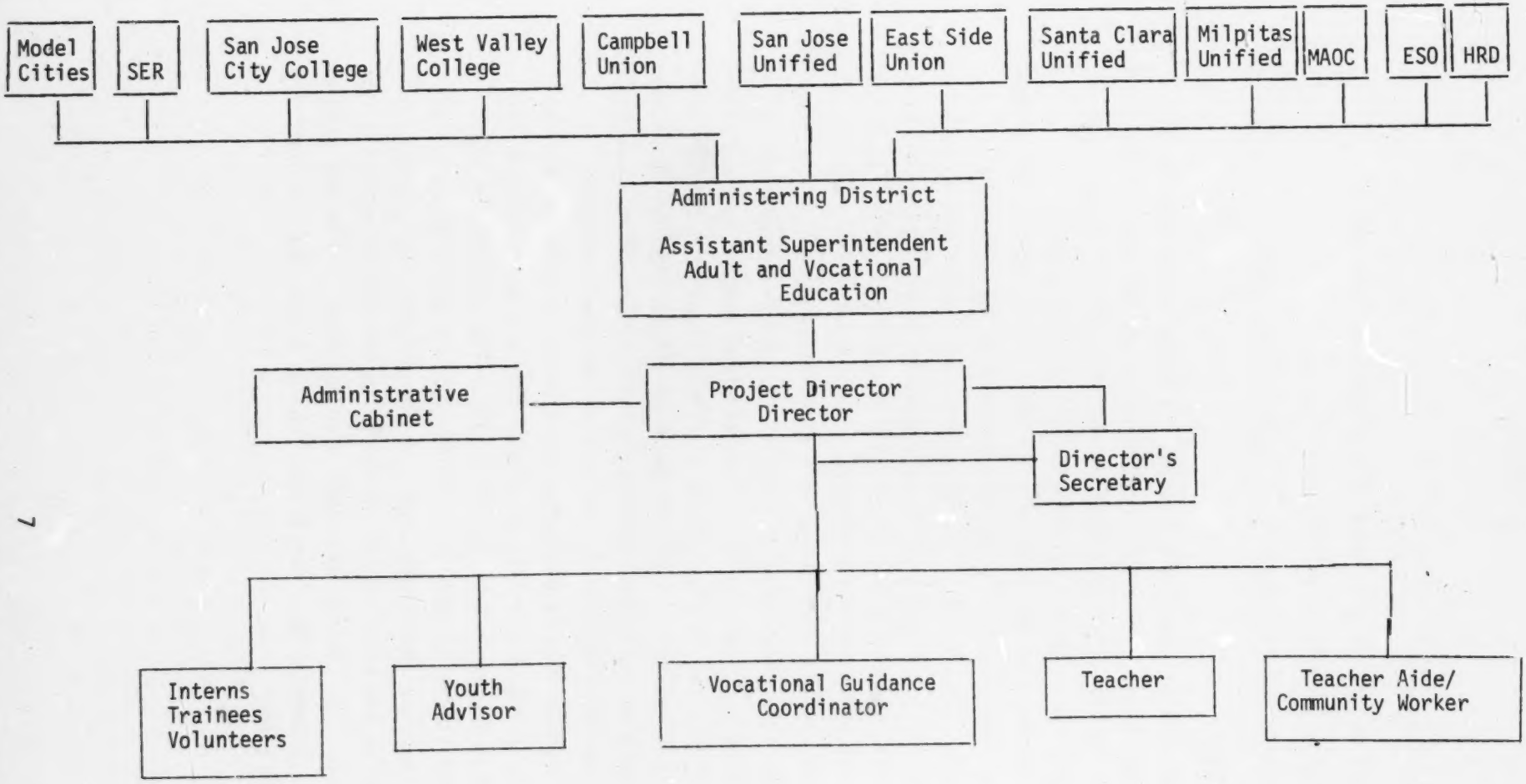
Since its inception, YCAP has incurred no major personnel, funding, or conceptual changes. However, two modifications or original plans have occurred. Thus far, YCAP has been limited to operating only one center (rather than the projected three) which serves only one-third of the target population. This can be related to YCAP's problematic annual funding. Because of the uncertain funding, the YCAP Director and staff have investigated possible avenues of new financial support from county, city, local agency, and other resources. For example, in June 1971, the staff submitted an application for an educational grant from Economic and Social Opportunities in San Jose. In January and November 1972, the staff submitted proposals to San Jose Model Cities. Unfortunately, YCAP's requests were rejected each time. An application that is currently pending with San Jose revenue sharing may generate funding from that source.

The original concept of YCAP's target groups was modified in 1972-73. In addition to out-of-school disadvantaged youths, YCAP, with cooperation from teachers, counselors, and deans of schools referring students to YCAP, identified a group of in-school students that conceivably could benefit from a conprehensive YCAP learning and counseling program more than they could from their traditional school programs. In 1971, 12% of the 954 students referred to YCAP were from this in-school group. They were:

1. 15 and 16 years old.

2. At the fifth- and sixth-grade levels in math and reading achievement.

ORGANIZATION CHART
OF YCAP



3. Socially immature.

4. Perceived as having attendance and discipline problems.

5. Not setting vocational or educational goals.

6. Not eligible for the majority of vocational programs.

7. Unemployed.

Therefore, the cabinet extended YCAP's goals to include provision of an alternative school program for potential as well as actual high school dropouts and out-of-school adults, thereby evolving from a short term educational and vocational program into a more comprehensive alternative school.

The general purpose of the alternative school is to provide the student who has failed in regular school a second opportunity for education in a program that teaches him educational, vocational, and social skills necessary to compete in today's labor market. It is a humanistic program that treats each individual with respect and as a separate and talented person with untapped abilities to offer the world of work. Because of their youth and limited readiness for work, the 15- and 16-year-old clients are especially encouraged to aim for reentry into their regular schools. All work accomplished at YCAP's school can be credited toward high school requirements and a diploma. The majority of YCAP's 15- to 16-year-old clientele do work at meeting some requirements at YCAP and return to their own high schools the following semester or year. Many of the older students work toward attaining their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) to qualify for work or the armed services.

It was anticipated that by extending the program in this manner, the number of 15- and 16-year-old potential school dropouts would increase from 12% of the students served by the project to 35%. The cabinet and staff felt that if these students, even after consistent and positive encouragement, would not complete their educations, at the minimum they would have received information and basic skills necessary to compete successfully for an entry-level job. The cabinet and staff also realized if YCAP met such an objective, it could command more consistent funding within the San Jose Unified School District.

Current Status of the Project

Target Population and Setting

Metropolitan San Jose has a minority population of approximately 30%, about 90% of which is Mexican-American. The average annual income of members of the minority population, which resides predominantly in the city's east side, is approximately $4,000. This population has an average educational level of 8.3 years, and the majority are employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

The youth sector of this population constitutes 17% of the total public school enrollment and 16% of the private, nonprofit school enrollment. The group's current school dropout rate is 14%, and nondropouts frequently have poor attendance records.

YCAP conducted a survey to identify the general characteristics, backgrounds, and goals of the population they serve. The YCAP clients can be characterized as follows:

1. 73% are members of disadvantaged minority groups.
2. 65% of these are Mexican-American.
3. 60% are male.
4. The average age is 17.7 years.
5. 60% are high school dropouts.
6. 39% were referred by the welfare and probation offices.
7. 13% were referred directly by the schools.
8. The majority are:
    a. Three to five years below the grade level of the grade last attended in reading and writing.
    b. Distrustful and suspicious of most of the adults with whom they deal.
    c. Hard-to-place with little work experience and motivation.
    d. Generally uninformed about the world of work and naive to employer expectations.

YCAP assumes that each client will have one first-choice, after high school career goal, even if that goal is unrealistic or tentative. The survey estimates indicated the following:

First-Choice Goal	Percentage Breakdown of Students in Program
1. College-bound--will work on at least a baccalaureate degree.	1%
2. Noncollege-bound--but will attend a two-year (terminal) college program, trade school, or vocational or technical program.	1.5%
3. Noncollege-bound--will take a job after leaving YCAP and graduating from high school.	4%
4. Noncollege-bound--will marry and keep house (will not work or obtain further education or training).	6%
5. Noncollege-bound--will enlist in the Armed Forces.	5%
6. Noncollege-bound--will travel.	0%
7. Noncollege-bound--has indefinite future goals, but plans to complete high school.	4%
8. Noncollege-bound--will complete YCAP program but will not complete high school.	41%
9. Noncollege-bound--will complete neither YCAP program nor high school.	42%
	100%

Goals and Objectives

In 1971, the consortium representatives identified several specific performance objectives of the YCAP project. In 1972, in preparation for the evaluation of YCAP, the project's goals were categorized into product and process objectives. Product objectives state tangible, measurable products that YCAP staff, cabinet, or youths should achieve as a result of the YCAP program. Process objectives outline activities and tasks that should be conducted to bring about the outcomes specified in the product objectives. Objectives were identified for (1) the young people who constitute YCAP's past and current clientele, (2) YCAP staff members, and (3) YCAP cabinet members. An example of a product and process objective from each of these three categories is presented in the charts on the following pages.

For Youth Objectives:

PRODUCT OBJECTIVE Y-1.

Between July 1, 1972, and June 30, 1973:

A. at least 1000 disadvantaged youths will request and receive at least one hour of vocational and/or educational help from YCAP;

B. at least 600 of these youths will be members of ethnic minority groups;

C. 300 of these 600 will come from the immediate Model Cities area in which YCAP is located or from an area with similar economically disadvantaged characteristics.

PROCESS OBJECTIVE Y-1:1.

YCAP will publicize its available services and invite referrals from the probation office, local schools, including continuation schools, Department of Human Resources Development, Model Cities, Economic and Social Opportunities, Inc., and other social agencies as well as self-referrals and peer referrals. The methods of publicity will include exposure through the print and broadcast media, personal contact, and contact of organizations.

PROCESS OBJECTIVE Y-1:2.

YCAP will provide a center and staff which facilitate vocational and/or educational counseling.

For Staff Objectives:

PRODUCT OBJECTIVE S-1.

The YCAP staff will enact the preceding 10 product objectives and their attendant process objectives. The staff will achieve these without undue reliance on the YCAP Cabinet.

A. at least 9 of the 12 cabinet members will state in an interview questionnaire that both (1) the extent to which the staff relied on the cabinet in enacting the youth objectives was appropriate (the cabinet was involved in important, not day-to-day administrative, concerns) and (2) can provide at least three critical instances of such decision making in which they were involved;

B. 80% will feel that the YCAP decision making process was democratic and that all decisions made by the cabinet were acted upon by YCAP staff.

PROCESS OBJECTIVE S-1:1.

The YCAP staff will attend periodic meetings with the cabinet members and will rely on the cabinet to establish policy guidelines for carrying out objectives. The staff will initiate and carry out day-to-day client-related decisions.

For Cabinet Objectives:

PRODUCT OBJECTIVE C-1.

Each YCAP cabinet member will assume a productive policy making role and intervene (in other aspects of decision making) at his discretion or at the request of the staff.

PROCESS OBJECTIVE C-1:1.

The YCAP cabinet will attend periodic meetings, be accessible at non-scheduled times, and within and outside of meetings will initiate discussions about problems they perceive.

Information from the evaluation report regarding YCAP's youth objectives and the efficacy of YCAP services is summarized below.

Three-fourths of the sampled clients stated that they had returned at least once after their initial visits to YCAP for further assistance. The majority of these youths felt that the specific YCAP service(s) they used fit in with and satisfied their vocational or educational needs.

Of the sampled clients that were counseled into job training programs, all stated that the training fit in with and satisfied their immediate vocational needs. Half of this group got jobs resulting from training and indicated relative satisfaction with the jobs at this point in their career planning.

Over 80% of the sampled youths that were directly placed in jobs stated that the jobs matched their interests and abilities. Just over half of this group have worked for six months or more in their placements.

Of those youths that were counseled to return to school for improving basic educational skills, over half felt that the school programs fit in with their educational needs and prepared them for job training.

Forty-seven percent of those sampled were referred to other community agencies, and over half indicated that they were assisted and felt they had been appropriately referred by YCAP.

Tables and other specific forms of data regarding all YCAP's objectives are shown in the evaluation report.

Project Staff

As stated earlier, the YCAP personnel include: (1) the Project Director, (2) a Vocational Guidance Coordinator, (3) a Youth Advisor, (4) an instructor half-time, and (5) the Director's secretary. Specific qualifications and detailed job descriptions were written for each position.

The YCAP Director selects his staff on the basis of previous work experience in and contact with community manpower agencies, ability to establish empathy and rapport with YCAP clients and serve them on a one-to-one basis; and potential to work effectively for clients in the YCAP center and to work through YCAP with local schools and agencies. All staff share counseling and teaching responsibilities.

Facilities, Materials, and Support

The single YCAP center is housed in an old store building in downtown east San Jose. The front part of the building consists of the secretary-receptionist's area and an informal waiting area, which is also used for

activities such as reading, school work, talking, counseling, and browsing through and discussing career program information.

The middle section of the building constitutes the hub of the YCAP center. It contains partitioned office areas for the Vocational Guidance Coordinator, the Director, the paraprofessional Youth Advisor; lavatory facilities; and the partitioned school area in which an informal classroom setting, academic materials, a "controlled reader" machine, and the instructor and his aides are located. YCAP's school offers an alternative learning environment that can motivate young people to set definite educational goals in preparation for careers. Some of the key thrusts of YCAP's school are:

1. The process of education actively involves the student in his learning. Each student confers regularly with the teacher about his specific learning needs and goals and his accomplishments, progress, and satisfaction.

2. The environment is one that is focused on learning rather than teaching. That is, the teacher serves as a facilitator, resource person, and problem solver rather than as a traditional, didactic lecturer. Occasionally, some students help each other, thereby learning through teaching and sharing ideas.

3. The curriculum is viewed as a starter rather than something to be covered.

4. The involvement of students in making choices and decisions about why they learn and what they learn is an essential pattern for the development of the program. Detailed cases in point are cited in a subsequent section.

To induce informality, none of the office sections has doors or official name plaques. Beyond the Youth Advisor's office area are snack and soft drink machines; the center of the room is occupied by a ping-pong table during game times or by conference tables during cabinet or other large meetings.

The final section of the building is occupied by a pool table for game breaks. On a large stretch of wall space, a YCAP student has completed several murals reflecting ethnic pride themes, and he works in the center during weekends creating more murals. Posters and signs reflecting occupational outlook themes and positive attitudes about learning and career planning as well as other student art work are hung on walls and partitions.

Local public media including radio and newspapers have recognized the significance of YCAP to the entire community and have given publicity to the efforts and successes of YCAP. One of the major purposes of YCAP was

the solicitation of active community involvement in serving the needs of disadvantaged youths. During the brief time that the program has been in operation, all consortium constituents have participated actively.

In addition to those agencies represented on the Administrative Cabinet, the YCAP staff has developed working relationships with the Welfare Department, the Santa Clara County and San Jose City Probation Departments, the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, San Jose State University, Bay Area Construction Opportunity Program, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Youth Services Bureau, Family Services Association, Mexican-American Youth Program, and others. Also, the federally funded schools for special vocational training programs such as Operation SER, OIC (Organizations Industrialization Center), MDT (Manpower Development Training), and MAOC (Mexican-American Opportunities Center) participate actively in the YCAP program by referring youths to the center and by providing contracted vocational instruction to YCAP clients.

One method used to expand community involvement was to provide YCAP training slots for paid trainees from the California Department of Human Resources Development Work Incentive Program, Supplemental Training and Employment Program, and San Jose City College Work-Study Program. At various times, individuals from each program work at the YCAP Center. This additional help provides increased time for liaison activities with the community.

During the next year of YCAP's operation, if refunding is secured and the program is able to expand, the following organized groups will be solicited for involvement: Alviso Family Health Center, Valley Medical Center, Comprehensive Health Planning Association, Social Planning Council, Santa Clara G.I. Forum, NAACP, the Human Relations Commission of San Jose, and the Manpower Council of Santa Clara County.

Special Factors

To achieve the program's youth objectives, the YCAP staff employs the following methods:

1. Assessment of each youth's needs in terms of his planning and progressing toward career-oriented goals.

2. Development of an individualized, needs-based program for each youth.

3. One-to-one interaction between each youth and each staff member he works with.

4. Use of specific YCAP services, facilities, and materials in each individual's program.

5. Follow-up and periodic evaluations on each youth's progress.

6. Periodic evaluations of YCAP's achievement of objectives and assessment of specific procedures and strategies used.

The YCAP experience of one 17-year-old Mexican-American girl who had dropped out of school to have a baby illustrates YCAP's methods at work. She related:

> The first time I came to YCAP I talked with one of the counselors. I told him about myself and that I wanted to learn and get my G.E.D. (General Equivalency Diploma). He gave me math and reading tests, and we talked about my enrolling in YCAP's school and finding me a babysitter. He told me all about YCAP and showed me around the center. I got a feeling for how much the counselors care and how much the students really want to be at YCAP.
>
> Right after I started the school program, the teacher, counselors, and I decided I was too advanced. We talked about getting me into a work program where I could also get my G.E.D.
>
> I went to the Neighborhood Youth Corps. I got my G.E.D. and trained in a clerical lab. That was two months ago. Now I have a clerical job. Twice a YCAP counselor has come by to talk with me at work to see how I'm doing. I have gone back to YCAP three times to talk about my future and to just visit everyone. I think I want to go to college and study art. The YCAP counselors have given me information and advice about the local colleges and their programs. They really care and treat me so personally. I know I can go into YCAP at any time and be accepted.

A 17-year-old young man related:

> I came to YCAP for help to find work. After my first talk with a counselor, I felt I was getting somewhere. Nobody ever tried to help me before. We talked about what I like, and I took some tests. Then I went to the YCAP school for a while, but I really wanted to find a job. I would come to YCAP and just play pool. Finally the teacher and all the counselors and I decided I should work and study at home.
>
> Now I have a job with the state that YCAP helped me get. I borrow books from YCAP and do schoolwork when I can. I bring my work in and talk with the teacher and counselors. They are interested in how I'm doing and what my plans are. If I hadn't come here, I'd still be out on the streets finding trouble.

Once a youth is placed or referred, the YCAP staff does periodic checks or follow-up procedures on his activities and progress. This is considered one of the most important aspects of YCAP's methodology. A file is kept on each youth who comes to the center, and in this way documentation is updated

on the progress of each youth and the specific feedback he offers about the YCAP services. Also, through follow-up, if a youth indicates high dissatisfaction with his current situation, he is offered further counseling to determine and discuss whether his problems are attitudinal or whether he would fare better in an alternative setting.

Many of the factors that contribute to the success of the YCAP project have been described in preceding sections. There are overwhelming consensus of and support from all participating groups, from the clients to community representatives, that YCAP is an excellent program and is meeting the needs and sharpening the potentialities of formerly ignored youths. At the center, a minimum of rules, decided on by both staff and clients, are used. That no unlawful or undesirable incidents have occurred at the center (for example, no theft, destruction, fights, drug problems) can be attributed to YCAP's humanistic philosophy, goals, and practices.

Broad Impact

Since YCAP is a community-based vocational-educational center and alternative school, its influences on the organization and processes in the formal school arena have been indirect.

Yet the Administrative Cabinet and Director recognize potential for more direct involvement within the consortium schools. For example, YCAP is steadily developing as a valuable resource-support system with knowledge, experience, insight, and considerable success in approaching and effectively working with disadvantaged youths. YCAP's team of experts--Project Director, Vocational Guidance Coordinator, and Youth Advisor--is now in a position to offer in-service training to school personnel concerning viable approaches and methods for educating disadvantaged youths.

With wisdom the cabinet is expanding YCAP's resource-support function gradually. The desire is to cooperate with school personnel--not provoke defensiveness--toward the overall goal of providing relevant, effective education for disadvantaged young people.

Evaluation

Evaluation of YCAP's performance to date has been monitored by the Administrative Cabinet. The process of evaluation has included the Director's monthly report to the cabinet, the YCAP statistical quarterly report, the quarterly report from the educational component (by the instructor), and comments from youths who have been served by YCAP.

The Director's monthly report evaluates daily activities of the center, staff reports of applicants, and administrative and budget business. The quarterly report on YCAP statistics is an enumeration of applicants who have come to seek services from the center. Included in this report are the personal characteristics of the applicant, where he has been referred and

for what types of services, and a follow-up, which determines if the choice of service was valid and if further support services are necessary. For example, from July 1, 1971, to May 30, 1972, the staff found that 954 young adults came into YCAP for services. Three hundred and fifty-three did not return for some of the following reasons: (1) they received the educational or vocational information they were seeking; (2) they were ready for jobs and needed work; (3) they were not interested in the services offered by YCAP; (4) YCAP could not meet their needs; (5) they were referred to other community service agencies; or (6) they wanted a program that paid them a stipend. Of the 601 young adults that did return for additional counseling, 115 were enrolled in the YCAP educational component (the alternative school), 43 were enrolled in vocational training, 75 were enrolled in educational programs, 87 were placed on full-time jobs, and 55 were placed on part-time jobs.

The quarterly report from the educational component is written by the credentialed teacher, who evaluates each student on his progress in reading, writing, and math. Other measures considered here are daily attendance, grooming, and scores from parts of the GED.

The evaluation through interview questionnaires given to youths served includes responses about the value of YCAP to the recipients and suggestions for improvements in YCAP services. Since more than 900 applications were taken, a random sample was selected, and these applicants were given the questionnaire in person, by telephone, or by mail.

All results are tabulated and summarized, and after each periodic evaluation, the staff confers to determine if changes are indicated in the project's structures, procedures, or techniques. For example, the fact that YCAP serves a steadily increasing 15- to 16-year-old, dropout prone population was indicated through the three-month evaluation. This necessitated restructuring of the center's educational component, described previously. Also, at the end of each fiscal year the staff compiles a general statistical summary to assess whether YCAP is achieving its stated objectives.

Future of the Project

Currently, the YCAP staff and cabinet are in the process of digesting and discussing the results and recommendations of the recent formative evaluation. Priorities concerning any major changes or new emphasis and plans for implementation

will be determined. The evaluation recommended that YCAP consider the following:

1. Maintaining and extending the management-by-objectives prototype established in the formulative evaluation.
2. Collecting more objective, hard data for evaluation purposes.
3. Disseminating information on key aspects of YCAP's planning, operations, costs, and impact so that its successes and errors can serve as models for persons seeking to implement similar programs.

Conclusions

YCAP focuses on the critical needs of its target youth population and is organized effectively to meet those needs. YCAP is successfully meeting 83% of its assessed objectives, and no objective has not been at least partially achieved. In addition, YCAP's overall rapport and relationships with community agencies and schools are positive and effective. The majority of youths interviewed noted that they were satisfied with the personal, one-to-one counseling or teaching they received at YCAP. In fact, the majority of the interviewed clients commented on the warmth, attention, understanding, and helpfulness offered by YCAP staff. Frequent mention was made that the staff's communication of care and concern was quite different from adult responses in regular school settings. The majority of client interviewees who had come to YCAP more than once were satisfied with the services they received and felt much more self-confident and competent as human beings, students, and workers. Finally, client interviewees attending the alternative school indicated that they achieved many more personal and academic successes at YCAP than they did in regular schools. Specifically, they liked (1) the nonfail aspects of the individualized instruction they received, (2) the one-to-one learning process, (3) the opportunity to work at their own paces on needed skills, (4) the opportunity to participate with YCAP staff in deciding what they would learn and why, and (5) the comfortable contrast of YCAP's physical facilities compared with those in regular schools.

Transportability

The Director feels that the YCAP project is transportable to other secondary school districts that wish to serve a similar target population and could receive similar funding. YCAP has many materials available to assist people in replicating the project, including: (1) materials that outline the

steps in program planning, implementation, and evaluation activities; (2) training materials for project staff; and (3) instructional and counseling materials for use by clients. Nevertheless, gaps would need to be filled by means of supplying additional information on YCAP.

All of the youths who were interviewed felt YCAP would help other young people similar to themselves. When asked to give specific details about the type of youths the program would be especially helpful to, they replied: "Anyone like me who feels dumb and put down by everyone in regular school or in the streets." "Lots of others like me do want to learn, to read, to be able to get good jobs, and support ourselves." "Mostly, my friends and I and others like us want to feel like somebodies; we want to count as being good people and to be given a chance." Learning to read or improving reading skills and attaining job placements through YCAP help were the achievements most often quoted.

Secondary school personnel or others desiring to replicate YCAP would benefit from developing the following before the program's inception: (1) a target population profile listing social, educational, economic, and vocational aspiration characteristics of one population to be served; (2) a community resources directory listing the names of all agencies that would participate with the program, including delineations of what support services each would provide; (3) a program flow chart illustrating a general process model for client needs assessment, evaluation, and prescription; and (4) job descriptions stating specific qualifications and detailed descriptions for each position. Examples of such materials are available from YCAP. Also, personal assistance can be arranged on a consultation basis and prearranged on-site visitations.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Goal: To provide a clearly designated place and highly individualized services for hard-to-place young people to come to prepare for entry into suitable jobs, improve their basic education skills if need be, and plan for satisfactory careers.

Youths Served:

Primarily, youths aged 15 to 24 who are under-educated, live in the local Model Cities area or similar economically disadvantaged area, and have little concept of the world of work and employer expectations. General characteristics of youths served include:

1. 73% are members of disadvantaged minority groups.
2. 65% of these are Mexican-American.
3. 60% are male.
4. The average age is 17.7 years.
5. 60% are high school dropouts.
6. 39% were referred by welfare and probation offices.
7. 13% were referred directly by schools.
8. The majority are
   a. Three to five years below the grade level of the grade last attended in reading and writing.
   b. Distrustful and suspicious of most of the adults with whom they deal.
   c. Hard-to-place with little work experience and motivation.
   d. Generally uninformed about the world of work and naive to employer expectations.

Staff:

The Project Director is professionally knowledgeable and has administrative experience in vocational education theory and practice, in manpower programs, and with community resources. The Director's staff includes his secretary, the Youth Guidance Coordinator, Youth Advisor, instructor, teacher aide/community worker, local university interns in education, and volunteers. All staff members have knowledge of and experience in manpower agencies and community liaison work; are sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged and minority young adults, especially Mexican-Americans; and share counseling and center responsibilities.

Funding Source:

100% California Vocational Education Act. Also, in-kind money contributed through services of participating community agencies.

Materials, Facilities, and Support:

The Project Director and staff and alternative school are housed in the YCAP Center in downtown east San Jose. Educational/vocational counseling and testing, a variety of occupational information, materials the staff has developed for contacting youths and employers, and all school materials are available at the center. Close communication is maintained with manpower agencies, area employers, and community and civic organizations.

Client Activities:

Clients are acquainted with the services of YCAP during the initial exploratory interview with a counselor. At that time, each youth discusses with the counselor which services might be most appropriate in serving his specific needs.

Contact Persons:

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References:

Hopkins, L.I., Jones, G.B., & Wolff, J.M. Formative evaluation of the 1972-73 SJUSD's Youth Career Action Program. San Jose, Ca.: San Jose Unified School District, 1973.